

H. W. ALLEN'S
INAUGURAL ADDRESS
1864

Treasure Room

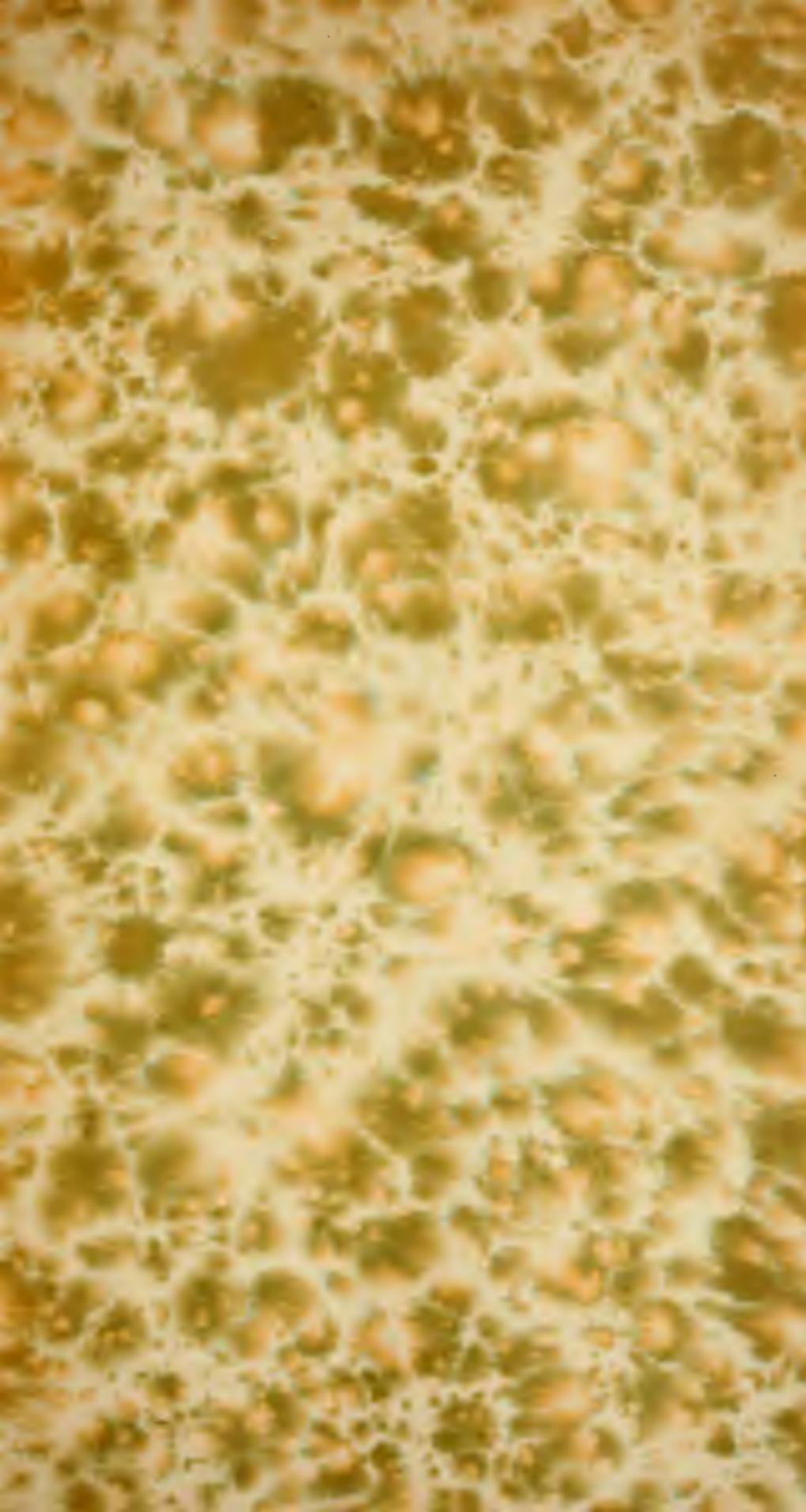


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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

GOVERNOR HENRY W. ALLEN,

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA.

DELIVERED AT SHREVEPORT JAN. 25, 1864.

Gentlemen of the General Assembly, and Fellow Citizens—Having been called to the Executive chair by the almost unanimous voice of the State, I now enter upon the duties of that office with the proud satisfaction that I have the confidence of the citizens of Louisiana. That confidence, I trust, has not been misplaced, for it shall be the sole object of my life to serve the State faithfully, honestly, and zealously.

Without any solicitation whatever on my part, I have been elected to the highest honor within the gift of the people. If I were ambitious, the measure of my ambition is full. To be called to the helm in these stormy times, to pilot the Ship of State, (I trust to a port of safety,) is indeed honor enough for any man. I would, therefore be reeant to every principle of honor, of manliness and of patriotism, if I permitted any thing but a high sense of conscientious duty to govern me in the administration of the affairs of State. I shall not falter in the discharge of the duties assigned me by the constitution, but whenever the good of the people require it, and I have the power, I shall take all responsibilities, and trust to you and your constituents to support me.

My distinguished predecessor this day leaves the Executive chair, and returns to private life. I fully appreciate the trials and troubles through which he has been called to pass. I honor his spotless integrity and his patriotic heart. May long life and happiness attend him, for he has been to the State a faithful servant.

The people having called me from the camp to assume the robes of civil office—come woe—I am prepared to do my duty. For nearly three years we have battled with a cruel and vindictive foe. We have suffered many losses, and gained many victories. The spirit of our people is still unbroken. The fires of patriotism still blaze as brightly on hill-top and on mountain, as when this great revolution began. Many portions of our fair State have been overrun by the enemy, many houses and homes have been burned and destroyed—many brave men have died in defence of our soil. Age and innocence have alike been murdered, and the widow and orphan have been brought to the door of starvation. The enemy, glutted with murder, rapine and plunder, seem to have sickened at their own outrages, and are now offering terms of peace; a species of mock pardon. But what terms of peace does the bloody Moloch at Washington suggest to his Congress?

1st. You must give up all your negroes and make them your equals.

The constitution of the United States guarantees property in your slaves—for Washington and Madison, and Jefferson, were all slave-holders under that constitution. But Lincoln's proclamation overrides all constitutional and judicial barriers, and aims a death blow at your dearest rights.

2d. You must swear not only to support the Federal constitution, but all the nefarious acts of the Black Republican party, and the

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unconstitutional proclamations of Abraham Lincoln.

3d. You must, if required, hunt down your brother and your neighbor, bind them hand and foot, and deliver them up to death. The father who has sons in the Confederate army, is ordered to forswear the land of his birth or adoption, and aid in the assassination of his own offspring.

The fiend of hell in all his malice never conceived such unnatural and infernal wickedness!

Great God! Peace to whom? Peace to you whose brothers have been slain—whose lands have been despoiled—whose homes have been burned—whose wives and whose daughters have been basely insulted! "Tis the voice of the murderer with bloody hands reeking from his assassination, who now proposes terms of amity to the brother of his bleeding victim! "Tis the incendiary outlaw who returns from burning your houses and despoiling your lands! "Tis the black hearted villain who has insulted your wives and daughters, and who now asks you to take a seat around his loathsome fireside and bask in the smiles of his own licentiousness! Forbid it, Almighty God! Let there be no peace between us until we are free forever from this accursed race! Is peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of reconstruction? Oh, think not of reconstruction. Reconstruction means subjugation, ruin and death. The martyrs of our holy cause—those heroic men who shed their blood for us at Manassas, at Shiloh, at Sharpsburg, and a hundred other battle fields, would rise in solemn procession from the chambers of the dead and rebuke this unholy alliance. A gallant young Louisianian was dying on the field of Shiloh; as I passed him, he called me to his side, said he: "My Colonel, I am dying. If you should live to get back to Louisiana, tell my aged father that I died for my country, and oh, tell him to fight this battle out—to lose negroes and lands and life itself, but never, never go back to the old Union."

Those words are still ringing in my ears, and I tell them to you to day: "Lose negroes, lose lands, lose every thing, lose life itself," but never think of reconstruction. There is a sea of blood between us, we cannot pass that sea. Let us rather add thereto a wall of living fire, and a gulf, deep and dark of eternal hate. I speak to-day by authority, I speak as the Governor of the State of Louisiana, and I wish it known at Washington and elsewhere, that rather than reconstruct this government and go back to the Union, on any terms whatever, the people of Louisiana will, in convention assembled, without a dissenting voice, cede the State to any European power. Give us the guillotine or Botany Bay, the knout, or Siberia, the bow-string or the Bosphorus, rather than suffer the brutal outrages of Yankee subjugation. I speak to day not only for the loyal citizens of Louisiana who have stood by the State in all her trials, but in behalf of the misguided individuals who have been compelled to take the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government. In their hearts they are true to us, and are praying daily for the triumph of our arms. They have felt the very iron in their souls, and know full well the curse of reconstruction. I speak by authority, for they write me daily, that they would rather, by ten thousand times, be the subjects of the Emperor of France, than the slaves of Abraham Lincoln. If God in His inscrutable Providence, should permit the enemy to overwhelm us, then let us retire to our mountains and our caves, and there let us swear by the blood of our murdered fathers and brothers—by the sufferings and the insults of our mothers, wives, and sisters, that we will issue forth and hunt the enemy, as we hunt the wild beast of the forest. Oh! give us honorable graves by far, in preference to base servitude, to chains and slavery.

"Aye! better be

Where the ensanguined Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylae."

The despot who now sits upon the Federal throne, is doubtless dreaming of the axe and halter—of the rack and dungeon—where-withal to wreak his vengeance on his supposed rebellious subjects. So once,

"At midnight in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power."

Morning came—Marco Bozarris was there. The Turk it was that died, and Greece was free. Our Bozarris will yet live to see the proud oppressor humbled in the dust. The history of the world does not show a solitary instance wherein six millions of brave people determined to be free, were ever conquered. The wars of Scotland began by Sir William Wallace and the Bruee, were carried on for a century against the power of England, and would have been continued to this day by the brave Scots, but Scotland's King became Sovereign of the Realm. The history of the Netherlands and the Low Countries is full of interest—full of encouragement to every patriot's heart. The militia, a mere mob, badly officered, and poorly armed and equipped, fought the armies of Spain, then the "harnessed chivalry" of Europe, for years and years, one generation taking up the war where the other had left it, until the Dutch Republic finally triumphed. But the history of the American Revolution claims our attention more than any other. We have as yet fought but three; our fathers fought for seven long years. At one time all their ports were more closely blockaded than ours—Boston and New York and Philadelphia—Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston and Savaunah, were all in the hands of the British, and remained in their possession for years. After a most disastrous campaign, Gen. Washington crossed the Delaware with only three thousand weary-worn soldiers. He had no army stores, no parks of artillery, no arsenals, no foundries—still he did not despair. He trusted in God and fought the British, and at Yorktown gained our independence. Should you be despondent when you have an army of three hundred thousand men in the field, commanded by such generals as Lee, Beauregard and Johnston? After all our wars and sieges and battles—after disease and death have done their work, we still have in this Confederacy, between the ages of fifteen and fifty, 700,000 men. The two States of Georgia and Alabama alone can easily furnish the entire Confederacy, east of the Mississippi River, with corn. South Carolina furnishes the rice and Florida the beef. Who talks then of despair? who is desponding? Let the croaker go to his wife, if he has one, and tie himself to her apron strings, and nurse the children the rest of his days! Providence has smiled upon the land everywhere, and blessed us with bread in abundance. Gen. Marion lived upon hard fare—Gen. Lee does the same; he lives on the same fare with the humblest soldier. But they all have enough. The heart must be ungrateful indeed, that murmurs now, when we have carried on this great struggle for three years and still there is plenty in the land.

Our people, it is true, have suffered much, but they bear their losses with patriotic fortitude. Yes, our people have suffered—how much, the Almighty Ruler of the Universe only knows. The world will never know. In the country parishes, black desolation is found in the trail of the despoiler. Farm houses have been stripped of every article

of furniture—barns and fences destroyed, the implements of husbandry have been burnt, and the very cloth of the poor widow has been cut from the loom by the order of Yankee Generals. In our cities it has been worse. The Beast Butler came to New Orleans a poor New England bankrupt, with empty pockets and a lie upon his eoward lips. He left that devoted city with the maledictions of all, for he basely insulted the women and robbed the men. The untold millions of wealth that this Beast stole in New Orleans are only known to himself and his robber brother.

Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts, I arraign you to-day at the bar of the civilized world. You told the people of New Orleans, upon your arrival there, that none should be compelled to take the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government, but that it was a privilege to be sought after by the citizens. But just so soon as you had them in your power, you required every man and woman in the city to come forward and take that oath. Many left, and many stayed and registered themselves as enemies. Then began by your orders the most outrageous promiscuous plundering that was ever witnessed on this continent. It was indeed the saturnalia of thieves. All were robbed who came under the ban of your displeasure. A very respectable merchant of that city, a non-combatant, finding that he, like all his friends and neighbors, would be robbed, sold his silver plate, a large and valuable set, to a widow lady to whom he was indebted. This lady put the plate on board a Danish ship, and took bills of lading for same. You heard of it, sent armed soldiery, took the ship, broke open the hatches, and seized the plate. Not satisfied with that, you sent this merchant to Ship Island, and kept him there, t hard labor for months, until Gen. Banks released him. You arrested another merchant, and demanded his plate—he informed you he had sent it off. Your reply was, "the plate or Ship Island." Finding that you could not get the plate, you released him upon his paying you a large amount of money, which money you pocketed. These are facts sworn to and subscribed in my office, and I record them here to show to the civilized world how the people of Louisiana have been treated by one of the Satraps of Abraham Lincoln. Every Sabbath morning, the thieves met at the den of the Beast, and the stealings of the past week were divided out. To the ja-kals he gave the spoons and trinkets, but reserved to himself the lion's share, the coin, the plate and the jewels. A large portion of the moveable wealth of the city of New Orleans and lower Louisiana, has been transferred to the pockets of this blear-eyed, incarnate devil—a great part of which he put into foreign exchange and sent to Europe; and now he is by far the richest man on the continent. He can loan money to the Rothchilds, and buy out the wealthiest citizen of New York. Cicero has given the name of Verres immortal infamy, and that of Butler is now known throughout the civilized world as a synonym for crime, cowardice and brutality. When the Southern student shall in future ages study the classics, as he reads that beautiful oration of Cicero against Verres, he will involuntary pause, and for the Sicilian robber, will read, Butler, the Beast! "I ask now, Verres, what hast thou to say against this charge?" I ask now, Butler the Beast, what hast thou to say against thy dark and damning crimes? At the dead hour of night, upon the false accusation of a negro woman, you dragged from a sick bed, an aged man, one of the most respectable citizens of New Orleans, and thrust him into a cold and miserable cell. He died of your treatment. His wife, an amiable, well bred and lovely woman, went to you, and upon her knees begged for her husband. You held a loaded pistol to the weeping face of that lady, and drove her from your bloated presence with the most vulgar and obscene oaths. With the fiendish heart of the hyen you tore open the tomb of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson,

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and robbed the grave of that gallant soldier. You may never feel the halter draw in this world. You may live to old age, and possibly die in your bed, with your stolen property around you. But a day will come, the "*dies irae*" will come, when you shall meet face to face the women you have brutally insulted, and the men you have robbed and murdered, at the bar of an avenging God ! Beware the fate of Verres, he died a felon's death. Mark Anthony demanded a portion of his ill-gotten gains, he refused and was slain. When lead to death he begged for that mercy he had so often denied to others. The spirits of your murdered victims say, beware ! The living friends of the dead say, beware ! "The patient search and vigil long" will find you out, and drag you from your hiding place. Your coat of mail will not save you, for your hour will come at last.

There is in the Vatican at Rome, an extraordinary painting, by one of the old masters. It is called the "Devil reproving Sin." The great artist has by prophetic pencil, portrayed the exact features of Benjamin F. Butler. As statues will, no doubt, be erected to him in all the Federal cities, I suggest that the holy Father, Pius the Ninth, be urgently solicited to send this painting to the city of New Orleans, for the present and all future ages to behold with horror and disgust.

In the small city of Baton Rouge, the enemy took special delight in destroying not only public, but private property. Not satisfied with burning the State House, with its valuable library, they took a malicious pleasure in robbing nearly every private residence in the place. They carried away as part of their "*warlike trophies*," fifty private pianos. The wardrobes of ladies were broken open and searched by Yankee commissioned officers, and their silk dresses were taken by these same officers and sent to their own families in Yankee land.

The Provost Marshal at Baton Rouge, an officer thought by some of our people to be a gentleman, and treated as such, was the foremost man, the leader, in this paltry theft. When an officer under orders from his General drives off a gang of negroes, he can perhaps be excused, for he's obeying orders. But when a Federal officer with a commission in his pocket, robs defenceless widows of their pianos, and steals their silk dresses, what can you think of such a nation. They are robbers all. In Point Coupee, they deliberately fired their cannon upon the Parish church while the people were engaged in worship; and in Florida they tore the sacred emblems of the Saviour from the altar of the Living God, and with unholy hands prostituted them in their filthy camps. If all the rich household furniture, and jewels, and plate, and coin, that Federal officers have stolen from the people of this Confederacy were heaped into one vast pile, it would form a huge monument of shame at which the civilized and christian world would stand aghast ! Yet, no Federal officer has ever been punished for these robberies; on the contrary, all have been promoted. The Beast, and Neal Dow, and Mitroy, and Hunter, with a host of lesser scoundrels, like Dudley and Killborn, still go unwhipped of justice. The jewels which they have torn from the persons of the most respectable ladies in the country, they now offer for sale in the public markets. The army and the navy rob—commanding Generals and Commodores steal. Some fancy a likely negro girl, others prefer a carriage and horses, while a third will take your piano or your wife's silk dresses. There is a wild hunt for plunder, a mania for stealing, from the Major General down to the humblest private in the ranks. And all this is done in the nineteenth century, and countenanced, yea, applauded, by the people who read the Bible and claim to be christians !

When Warren Hastings returned to England, with his skirts dripping with Indian blood, and his pockets filled with Indian gold, he was met by the eloquent rebuke of Burke and Sheridan, and a host of noble Britons. He was arraigned ~~4183~~ of his country, and impeached

for high crimes and misdemeanors. In eloquent, burning, and indignant language, he was denounced as the enemy of mankind. There is no Burke, no Sheridan in the Federal Congress. But the robber who returns from the South with a hundred cold blooded murders upon his soul, and millions of stolen property in his possession, is honored and promoted and feted, and bespattered with fulsome praise.

But let us turn from these disgusting scenes to more pleasant topics.

In a recent tour through most of the parishes of the State, I found the great wants of the country to be cotton cards and medicines. Our fair country-women have been the truest patriots of the land. The main object of their lives seem to be to clothe their sons and brothers. It is a pleasing sight to visit the farm-houses of the State in these warlike times. You will find the mother and her daughters seated around the fire side, plying the loom, the spindle and the needle—all busily engaged in making clothing for their soldier boys. Heaven will smile upon these noble women, and a grateful country will ever hold them the dearest treasure on earth. I shall in due time recommend to you, that you enact a law, placing in the hands of each female of this State, above the age of eighteen, a pair of cotton cards, free of cost and charges.

I shall further recommend to you the passage of a bill for the purpose of supplying the people of the State with medicines. In many portions of the country, calomel, opium, and quinine cannot be had. The people must have them; and I shall recommend that the Executive be empowered to send competent and trustworthy agents to purchase a supply of these necessary articles for the people of the State. I propose, when purchased, that they be distributed among the practising physicians at cost and charges, requiring them by bond, to administer the medicines to their patients at the same prices. With a plenty of cotton cards we can clothe our soldiers in the field, and with a plenty of medicines, we can heal our sick at home—and backed by a patriotic people, we will fight the enemy for forty years to come. When was there ever seen, since the world began, so much patriotism exhibited as you find among the ladies of New Orleans. They have been imprisoned, robbed and insulted. Like the chosen people of God who sat by the rivers of Babylon, they are now weeping in their captivity, and looking with anxious hearts for the coming of our armies, and the triumph of our cause. Many of our noble women, hearing of the sufferings and insults of their sisters in the city, have fled the approach of the enemy, and now with their tender children are living in wretched hovels, battling the discomforts of life and the hardships of war with hearts of Spartan mothers. They shall see their homes again, and

“The baby that’s sleeping
While its mother is weeping,”

shall live to be the joy of its mother’s heart. Oh, Mothers of Louisiana, God Almighty bless you in this your hour of trial! Kiss your gentle babes and send your sons to battle. Your prayers have pierced the clouds—they have ascended to the skies, and our Heavenly Father will, in his own good time, answer your petitions. We are told in the Sacred Scriptures that Miriam once stood upon the Red Sea banks and clapped her hands for joy, for the hosts of Pharaoh were destroyed—“the horse and the rider were thrown into the sea.” Yes, ladies of Louisiana, you too shall clap your hands for joy, for we will triumph. The vandal hosts of the destroyer will be hurled back to their homes, and peace, gentle peace, with healing in his wings, will come and bind up the broken hearts, and bless our distracted land.

And now, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, I cannot close this

address without touching upon a very important subject—by far the most important that will come before you. You are the auditory nerve of this State. What is spoken here is, or will be, heard in every portion of the land. I therefore address the people of Louisiana through you to-day. Would to God that all my fellow citizens were here on this occasion. If a soldier deserts his flag, leaves the army without permission, and comes home to look after his wife and children, do not you and I, and all the people, point the finger of scorn at him? A hue and cry is raised—the cavalry is sent out—he is arrested, court-martialed, and punished as a deserter. Why? Because there is an obligation resting upon him, to obey his commanding officer, stand by his colors and fight the battles of his country. There is an obligation equally as strong resting upon those who stay at home and enjoy the comfort of life, to support the soldier's wife and children. You men of wealth whom God has blessed in "basket and in store," open your corn cribs and your meat houses, and send for the soldier's wife and children. Bid them come freely, without money and without price, and consider it not only a duty, but a privilege to aid them. Oh, you have a fearful responsibility resting upon you. You have it now in your power to do much good to your country, for by feeding the soldier's wives at home, you will keep the soldiers themselves in the field. Most of the desertions that take place are caused by news from home that the soldier's family is starving.

Our wealthy men, generally have nobly done their duty. They have given their sons cheerfully, and their substance freely, to the Confederacy. They have opened their barns and store-houses to the poor and the needy, and are now, with generous hearts, doing all in their power for our sacred cause. Noble Louisianians, be not weary in well doing. You will be embalmed in the affections of your countrymen, and the recipients of your kindness will ever bless you.

There are however, I am sorry to say it, a few men in our midst, who seem to take no interest whatever in this war. They send their negroes to labor on the public works through compulsion, and pay their taxes grudgingly. They stay at home and hoard up their riches with miserly care, and leave the soldiers to fight their battles in the field.

Their barns and their store houses are shut up to all except the monied man, the speculator, who buys in large quantities, and then grows fat upon the necessities of the poor. To these men I would say, "the talent which you have received, and digged and hid in the earth shall be taken from you." If we fail, the robber will lay his rough and heavy hands upon your lands and your slaves, and neither you nor your children will ever enjoy them again. What are your broad acres and your hundreds of slaves compared to the issues of the great struggle now going on in this country. The lurid fires of war are now blazing around you. The enemy is at your door, and you sit still hugging to your bosoms the delusive hope that you will make some terms with him, and save your property. If the enemy spared not the slaves of good Union men, do you think he will spare yours? If we fail your negroes will be driven off at the point of the bayonet, and your lands will be parceled out amongst the hireling soldiery of Abraham Lincoln.

I, therefore, urgently appeal to every man in the State, not to speculate in order that he may make more money, but to do all he can for the wives and children of those who are fighting his battles. I earnestly appeal to every man rich or poor, to aid in every possible way he can, the wife of the gallant soldier, who cannot remain at home to take care of his property, or minister to the wants of his family.

It may well be asked in these troublous times, what will become of the negro?

The status of the negro race has been fixed by the immutable laws of God, and the Yankee at home does not wish to change it even if he could. That race has ever been, is now, and ever will be "the hewers of wood and drawers of water." Go to New England, New York, or Illinois, and you will find them everywhere performing the menial offices of life. If when this war is ended there should be found alive any negroes in the hands of the enemy, they will have a hard time indeed. They will not be permitted to labor on the railroads, the canals, or the public works of any kind, for the Irish and the Dutch will rise in mobs and drive them off. Yankee society will not educate them for the bar, the bench, or the pulpit. Yankee pride will not tolerate their inter-marriage with the whites. Driven from the social circle and all the industrial pursuits of life, what will become of the poor negro? As a drivelling out-east, he will become a mendicant wanderer. His doom will be the prison and the work-house.

There are two kinds of abolitionists in the United States—the political and the religious. The religious steal the negroes, and the political kill them. From reliable information in my possession, two-thirds of all the negroes that have gone to the enemy, are now in their graves. Many are daily deserting and returning to their old masters, sick and sore and emaciated, and begging that they may be permitted to die at home in peace. There was once in the river parishes and the lower portion of this State, the most contented and happy race of laborers ever seen on this earth. Music and the merry laugh were nightly heard from their comfortable quarters, for peace and plenty and quiet blessed both master and servants. But now desolation, want, disease fill the cabins of these once happy and contented laborers. In an evil hour the destroyer came. He poisoned the ears and corrupted the hearts of these people. They have either been enticed away from their comfortable homes or driven off by force of arms, and now upon hard fare and harder work they can only dream of the blessings of the old plantation, where the meat house and corn crib were always full and at their command.

The white inhabitants of our State have suffered much in this war, but the blacks have suffered far more. I have seen many of these unfortunate creatures who, at the risk of their lives, have run off from the enemy's encampments. They all give the most heart-rending account of their sufferings. Men, women and children are crowded together in miserable huts. No attention is paid to the sick, but little medicine, and no nurses. Mothers die on the cold ground, with their little helpless children around them. In their own language, "the Doctor was seldom sent for, and when he did come the sick ones always died," and when they died they were buried more like dogs than human beings! What a commentary on Yankee philanthropy! They first killed the negro to make him free, and then refuse him a Christian burial!!

We will carry the institution of domestic slavery with us triumphantly through this war, and then it will rest on a firmer basis than ever, and be administered better and more wisely. This institution will triumph with us, because it is right and just in the sight of Almighty God. That best of all books, the Bible, which is so much despised by the Abolitionists, from the beginning to the end thereof, sanctions slavery. The patriarchs were all slave-holders, and bought and sold their slaves then as we do now. The same inspired men to whom the Ten Commandments were delivered, and who stood in the presence of the Great Jehovah, gave laws for the government of slaves. President Lincoln and his followers say that it is an awful sin to own a slave, but that it is not only right but highly commendable to burn a church, rob the widow and the orphan, and shoot down unoffending citizens!! It is no harm to break open a Masonic Lodge,

and with sacrilegious hands steal and desecrate its regalia ! It is all right and proper to devastate whole parishes, burn villages and barns and store-houses, bombard cities without notice, and hang non-combatants ; but oh ! it is a terrible crime to buy a negro, treat him well, and let him work for you ! Shame, eternal burning shame upon such loathsome hypocrisy ! There ever has been, and there is now, the kindest feeling existing between the master and his servants. Notwithstanding a brutal and vindictive enemy has advised the negro to murder their masters, there have been no evidence of insurrection in our midst—on the contrary there are hundreds of instances where the master has gone to the war and left his wife and children in the hands of his negroes, and well have they served, and guarded, and protected them.

When the children of Israel went up out of Egypt to the promised land, they took their servants with them. Master and servant hand in hand together crossed the Red Sea, and when safely over, they both alike rejoiced at the destruction of their pursuer. The faithful historian who shall in after times write the history of this war, will doubtless record many instances wherein the negro slave has been unfaithful to his owner—but he will, on the other hand, devote many a bright page to the deep fidelity and noble heroism of the servant in defence of the rights and interests of his master, and that historian may close his volume by recording this important fact—that “at the close of the great struggle between the North and the South, master and servant were found in the ranks, side by side, fighting bravely, shoulder to shoulder, for the independence which they have so gloriously achieved, and for the liberties which they now enjoy.”

I shall take occasion to call the attention of the General Assembly to the passage of such laws as I think the time demand and the exigencies of the country require. Especially shall I call your attention to the unauthorized and illegal manner in which the “Impressment Act” has been executed in this State. Officers, or those claiming to be officers of the Confederacy, in making their illegal impressments, have added insult to injury. This must be stopped, and I shall look to you for the passage of a law making such offences a felony, and punishable by imprisonment in the State Penitentiary. The people must and shall be protected in all their civil rights. In this connection, I am happy to express my hearty approbation of the conduct of Lt. Gen. E. Kirby Smith, the Commanding Officer of this Department, and of Major Gen. Taylor. These commanding officers have not only done their duty most nobly, as gallant soldiers, but whenever there has been a conflict between the civil and military authorities, they have most cheerfully submitted to the decisions of the Courts of the State. Happy are we indeed, in these days of despotic power, to have such patriotic Generals. May they long live to receive the plaudits of a grateful country !

You, gentlemen, are assembled together on no ordinary occasion. You have much to do. Your constituents expect much at your hands. My hearty co-operation will cheerfully be given to every measure that may tend to guard the citizen in his rights, and secure the liberties of the people. While I urge upon you the strictest economy in all your acts, still I would say, spare no expense. Stand not upon dollars and cents, when the safety of your country requires your action. Let every man who owes service to his country go to the army. Let every man who stays at home do his duty—frown down extortion and vice in every shape and every form. Be true to yourselves, and leave the rest to God. Be true to yourselves, and the country is safe.

